

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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O 281936Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6290

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 03688

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PLEASE PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR DAVID AARON ONLY

DEPARTMENT FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST FROM ROBERT
HUNTER

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PARM NATO GW
SUBJECT: FRG VIEWS ON ERW DECISIONS

1. NSC STAFFER HUNTER AND EMBASSY OFFICER MET
SEQUENTIALLY WITH KLAUS BLECH AND JUERGEN RUHFUS TODAY.
HUNTER WILL BRING TO WASHINGTON TOMORROW FULL MEMCON.
THIS CABLE DEALS WITH ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS
DISCUSSIONS.

2. BLECH. HE INDICATED CONTINUED DIFFICULTIES AT
ARRIVING AT FINAL FRG DECISIONS, CITING RECENT CLOSE
ANTI-TERRORIST VOTE, AND NOTING THAT ER DIVISIONS ARE
STRONG IN SPD. CDU ENDORSEMENT OF ER MADE CHANCELLOR'S
PROBLEM MORE DIFFICULT. FOREIGN OFFICE MEETING WILL BE
HELD NEXT WEEK -- "THE FIRST BUT PERHAPS NOT THE
LAST" -- LOOKING TO A FEDERAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING
ON MARCH 14 ON ER. FRG RECOGNIZES NEED TO COMPLETE
PROCESS WELL IN ADVANCE OF NATO SUMMIT AND UNSSOD, BUT
IS ALSO SENSITIVE TO NEED TO PERMIT ENOUGH TIME FOR
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OTHER ALLIES -- NOTABLY THE NETHERLANDS BUT ALSO
BELGIUM -- TO PREPARE THEIR POSITIONS POLITICALLY.
FRG HAS HELD TALKS WITH NETHERLANDS, AND MOST
RECENTLY WITH BELGIUM -- WHICH REPORTEDLY HAD REMAINED
SILENT AT NAC MEETING LAST FRIDAY. HE EXPRESSED
CONSIDERABLE OPTIMISM THAT BOTH WILL BE BROUGHT AROUND,
AND FRG IS PREPARED TO USE INFLUENCE. PROBLEM IN

NETHERLANDS IS NEW DEFENSE MINISTER WHO IS OPPOSED TO
ER, WHEREAS THERE SHOULD NOT BE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM

WITH FOREIGN MINISTER. SIMONET (BELGIUM) IS HANDI-
CAPPED BY MILITARY "WATCHDOG" IN HIS OFFICE WHO IS
ALSO OPPOSED TO ER. ON NORWAY, BLECH REPORTED HIGH-
LEVEL ASIDE FROM HIS COUNTERPART KRISTIANSEN DURING
RECENT VISIT TO OSLO THAT NORWAY'S POSITION SHOULD NOT
BE READ AS NEGATIVE, BUT IS STILL COMPLETELY OPEN.

3. BLECH SAID THAT QUESTION OF SS-20 VERSUS MBFR LINK
IS STILL A DIFFICULT ONE (INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF WHAT
PRECISELY COULD BE ASKED FOR IN THE CONTEXT OF AN
MBFR LINK). THERE IS A LOGIC BEHIND AN MBFR LINK,
SINCE THERE IS A SYMMETRY WITH THE TANK PROBLEM.
HOWEVER, "LOGIC" IS NOT ALWAYS CONTROLLING, WHEN OTHER
FACTORS, INCLUDING POLITICAL, ARE CONSIDERED. HE
EXPRESSED STRONG DESIRE TO HAVE A FURTHER, MORE
EXTENDED, PAPER ON OUR RATIONALE FOR THE SS-20, WITH
IMPLICATION THAT THIS PAPER WOULD STRENGTHEN THE CASE
FOR SS-20 LINK AT SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING.

4. RUHFUS. IN MIDST OF LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF US-
GERMAN RELATIONS, RUHFUS ALSO RAISED ER -- NOTING, AS
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HE DID, THAT CONSULTATIONS ON THIS ISSUE (ESPECIALLY
AARON-VAN WELL) HAD BEEN EXTREMELY USEFUL. THE FRG IS
NOW CONCERNED TO GET US THINKING ON NEXT STEPS. RUHFUS
INDICATED THE NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A SCENARIO FOR
FURTHER ACTION WITH GREATEST CARE, BOTH AS TO OVER-ALL
STRATEGY AND AS TO TACTICS WITHIN ANY FOLLOW-ON NATO
MEETING (WITH PROVISIO THAT THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT
APPEAR TO BE A PROCESS DOMINATED BY THE US AND GERMANY
ALONE).

5. RUHFUS STRESSED THE STILL CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL
DIFFICULTIES FOR FRG, HIGHLIGHTED BY THE ONE-VOTE
MARGIN IN LAST WEEK'S ANTI-TERRORISM VOTE, WHICH WILL
BE NOTHING COMPARED TO POTENTIAL DISSENSION WITHIN THE
SPD ON ER. HE ALSO NOTED THE EXTRA DIFFICULTIES POSED
FOR THE CHANCELLOR BY LAST WEEK'S FDP POSITION
INCORPORATING MOST OF THE OVER-ALL STRATEGY ON ER
APPROVED BY THE FEDERAL SECURITY COUNCIL. (EMBASSY

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COMMENT: THE FDP POSITION ALSO FOLLOWED BY SOME DAYS
A COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION OF THE ER ISSUE, INCLUDING
ESSENTIALLY SAME ELEMENTS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
POSITION, IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLE BY EGON BAHR.)

6. INDICATING HIS VIEWS STRICTLY PERSONAL AND
EXPLORATORY, RUHFUS POSED A SERIES OF
QUESTIONS TO WHICH ANSWERS ARE NEEDED TO CLARIFY
FRG THINKING PRIOR TO SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING IN
MID-MARCH.

A. WOULD US BE PREPARED TO SEE A SEPARATION
IN TIME -- POSSIBLY OF SOME DAYS -- BETWEEN US
ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRODUCTION DECISION AND NATO ACTION
ON PARTS 2 AND 3 OF TOTAL PACKAGE? (HUNTER, ON SAME
INFORMAL EXPLORATORY BASIS, EXPRESSED STRONG DOUBTS
ABOUT THIS POSSIBILITY, IN TERMS OF PROBLEMS OF PRESS
SPECULATION AND EFFECTS ON UNCERTAIN ALLIES DURING
THE INTERVENING PERIOD. THE PACKAGE HAS A LOGIC AND
INTERCONNECTEDNESS -- PLUS US POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS --
THAT ARGUE FOR SIMULTANEOUS ACTION.)

B. WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR APPROPRIATE NATO
BODY SIMPLY TO "NOTE" US PRODUCTION DECISION ANNOUNCE-
MENT, WHILE ENDORSING PARTS 2 AND 3 OF PACKAGE?

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C. WHAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR ENDORSEMENT OF ER APPROACH (WITH THE ABOVE QUESTIONS SET ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT)? WOULD NPG PERMREPS BE A GOOD CHOICE, OR WOULD US NEED HIGHER-LEVEL BODY TO APPROVE? (ADVANTAGES OF NPG PERMREPS WOULD PERMIT SOME ALLIES TO BE SILENT THOUGH THESE ALLIES WOULD HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO INDICATE THAT THEY DID NOT DISSENT, IF ASKED.) IF HIGHER LEVEL GROUP WERE DESIRED, COULD IT BE FULL NPG -- OR WOULD THAT NOT INCLUDE ENOUGH NECESSARY COUNTRIES? IF TO BE DONE IN THE NAC, IN WHAT WAY SHOULD IT BE DONE?

7. RUHFUS ALSO COMMENTED ON THE QUESTION OF SS-20 VERSUS MBFR. HE NOTED THAT THE MBFR LINK HAD A CERTAIN LOGIC, BUT SAID THAT THE MORE HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE SS-20, THE MORE HE COULD SEE MERIT IN THIS APPROACH, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW BOTH OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND THROUGH HIGHLIGHTING THE PARTICULAR THREAT OF SS-20 TO WESTERN EUROPE. HE SECONDED BLECH'S REQUEST FOR FURTHER SUPPORTING MATERIAL ON US THINKING ABOUT RATIONALE FOR SS-20, INDICATING THAT THIS WOULD BE VERY VALUABLE IN PREPARING FOR THE FEDERAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING IN MID-MARCH. HE AND BLECH WOULD VALUE HAVING THIS FURTHER PAPER SPELLING OUT ARGUMENTS FOR AND DISCUSSIONS OF SS-20 LINK BY FRIDAY'S POLITICAL DIRECTORS' MEETING. (AGAIN, THIS SOUNDED LIKE TACTICAL DEVICE, TO HAVE AS MUCH BUTTRESSING MATERIAL AS POSSIBLE, PRESUMABLY IN ADDITION TO PAPER PASSED TO RUTH LAST WEEK.) BLECH WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS FRG THINKING FURTHER ON FRIDAY.

8. ON SEPARATE SUBJECT, RUHFUS SAID THAT CHANCELLOR
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SCHMIDT WILL MAKE A MAJOR SPEECH IN HAMBURG ON FRIDAY, INCLUDING LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF US-FRG RELATIONS. HE PREDICTS WE WILL BE PLEASED.
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